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Allegiances

MistClan

Leader: Featherstar- gray tom with white paws and black splotches

Deputy: Volenose- brown tom with black splotches and white paws

Medicine Cat: Littlespots- white tom with black spots

Warriors

Halfpath - brown tom with a black tail and white ears

Apprentice: Amberpaw

Honeystripe - golden she-cat with white paws

Greenleg - black tom with one blue-gray leg

Emberwing - ginger tom with bright blue eyes

Snowfoot - snowy-white tom with ginger eyes

Runningleap - small black tom cat with white paws

Apprentice: Daisypaw

Sunsong - tall yellow tom with blue eyes

Spottedfrost - tortoiseshell she-cat with amber eyes

Apprentice: Barkpaw

Russetpelt - reddish-brown tabby tom with white paws and green eyes

Smokeberry- dark grey she-cat with a lame foreleg and green eyes

Quietflower - gray she-cat with pretty blue eyes

Apprentice: Hazelpaw

Apprentices

Amberpaw - reddish she-cat with yellow eyes

Barkpaw - brown tom with green eyes and very fluffy ears

Hazelpaw - ginger tabby she-cat with amber eyes

Daisypaw - light brown tabby with pale green eyes

Queens

Goldensky- golden she-cat with pale blue eyes. Mother of Flowerkit (gold and orange she-kit) and Willowkit (gold and orange she-kit)

Dawnstep- russet-colored she-cat with dark green eyes. Mother of Mosskit(grey tortoiseshell she-kit), Lionkit(golden tom) and Eaglekit(russet tom)

Icesong- white she-cat with a berry-pink nose and blue eyes. Mother of Ratkit (scrawny grey tom)

Mousespots- brown she-cat with darker brown spots

Elders

Pebblerock - gray she-cat with sharp yellow eyes

Whiteflower- white she-cat with one green eye, one blue eye

Raccoontail- grey tabby tom with amber eyes

WolfClan

Leader: Falconstar- grey-brown tabby tom with yellow eyes

Deputy: Honeystep- ginger she-cat with green eyes

Medicine Cat: Tigerleaf- brown tabby she-cat with blue eyes

Warriors

Webfoot- white tom with gray stripes

Apprentice: Pouncepaw

Deatheye- black tom, blind in one eye

Apprentice: Facepaw

Ivyspots- brown she-cat with darker brown splotches

Apprentice: Bushpaw

Adderflight- brown tabby tom with yellow-green eyes

Apprentices

Facepaw- black tom with a gray face

Pouncepaw- small brown tom with golden eyes

Bushpaw- tawny she-cat with blue eyes

Queens

Barkbelly- white she-cat with light brown stomach (Mother of Weedkit and Smokekit)

Treecloud- brown she-cat with amber eyes (Mother of Earkit, Toothkit, and Deadkit)

Fernstorm- grey and white she-cat with green eyes (Mother of Birchkit)

Elders

Shineface- black she-cat with a white face

Stumpyface- grey tom with no tail and a disfigured muzzle

Brokenwhisker- brown tom with white paws and shrivelled-up whiskers

Stripedeye- ginger tabby tom with scars over one eye

BrookClan

Leader: Toadstar- silver tom with big blue eyes

Deputy: Beestripe- pale ginger tabby she-cat with amber eyes

Medicine Cat: Fallowstep- brown she-cat with bright yellow eyes

Warriors

Mossflower- light brown tabby she-cat with green eyes

Apprentice: Fawnpaw

Sweetpath- cream she-cat with white paws

Brightsong- cream she-cat with brown splotches

Apprentice: Clawpaw

Echofur- gray tom with darker flecks

Apprentice: Thistlepaw

Hollyflame- bright ginger she-cat with brown eyes

Apprentice: Shimmerpaw

Petaltail- ginger she-cat with amber eyes

Apprentices

Thistlepaw- grey and white tom with blue eyes

Clawpaw- gray tom with blue eyes

Shimmerpaw- silver tabby she-cat with orange eyes

Fawnpaw- Brown she-cat with white spots

Queens

Windfrost- white she-cat with light grey patches (Mother of Flykit and Larkkit)

Specklenose- light brown she-cat with darker flecks (Mother of Twigkit, Sparkkit, and Fernkit)

Dovesky- gray she-cat with white paws

Elders

Branchpelt - brown tom with blue eyes and a small tail

Likenfur- ginger tabby tom with yellow eyes

CherryClan

Leader: Owlstar- grey tom with yellow eyes

Deputy: Lilytail- cream she-cat with green eyes
Apprentice- Bluepaw

Medicine Cat: Branchtail- white tom with brown tail

Apprentice: Rosepaw

Warriors

Oakstripe- brown tom with darker brown stripe down his back

Pebblefur- grey she-cat with icy blue eyes

Apprentice: Yellowpaw

Hailfall- white tom with orange eyes

Stonesplash- grey she-cat with white paws and ears

Apprentice: Redpaw

Sparrowflight- brown tabby she-cat

Frostwhisker- white she-cat with yellow eyes

Robinsong- black she-cat with amber eyes

Heavyface- large ginger tabby tom with green eyes

Apprentices

Yellowpaw- golden tabby she-cat

Redpaw- reddish brown tom

Bluepaw- blue-grey she-cat

Rosepaw- brown with black patches

Queens

Berrystem- white she-cat with orange spots. Mother of Vinekit and Juniperkit

Heathersong- black she-cat. Mother of Whitekit and Aspenkit

Elders

Duckwing- long furred yellow tabby

Finchclaw- ginger tom with yellow eyes

Snowheart- white she-cat with blue eyes

Prologue

The dark grey she cat let a yawn escape her tired jaws as she limped from the warriors den. All she wanted was to sleep, to let her head hit the soft moss of her nest and let the day's events fade into blackness, but for some reason, she couldn't. There was a thorn of uneasiness in her side, warning her of a coming danger, and it just wouldn't come out.

Looking down at her lame front leg, a thought crossed the she-cat's mind. *If what I'm worried about is a real threat, will I be able to fight against it?*

She shook the thought away, and instead limped towards the camp entrance. All she needed was a good walk to wash away her irrational fear. There was no danger in MistClan, was there?

The grey she-cat padded through the dark forest of mist, using her ears to guide her. She had started to calm down, realizing how silly it was to worry while surrounded by such a supporting group of cats.

However, the thorn in her side returned at full force when she heard a familiar voice meowing behind her.

"Ah, Smokeberry, I finally find you alone." The voice was definitely of a tom's, and it was deep, sinister, and chilled Smokeberry's body down to every last nerve.

She turned to face the tom, but the mist was clouding her vision, along with the usual darkness of night. "W-who's there?" Smokeberry called out nervously, taking a step back.

"You know, Smokeberry, no one would care if you were to... disappear." The voice spoke threateningly, full of venom. "I can't believe MistClan has supported you for so long. After the accident, you became useless. Now you're just another mouth to feed."

Smokeberry's fur stood on end as her green eyes widened. Pure fear ran through her veins until she was frozen in place. She couldn't speak, couldn't move.

The tom let out a soft laugh, and Smokeberry could hear him stepping forward. Suddenly, she could see him. A member of her clan, and a cat she had trusted. She let out a gasp, staring up at him in shock. "W-why? I though you... I-I thought-!"

A flurry of brightly coloured fur was all Smokeberry saw before he struck her cheek. "MistClan would be better off without you." He said, his voice eerily calm, before he started to laugh once more.

Smokeberry stared up at him, letting the fear take over and grasp her in its deadly claws. *This is how I die...*

Chapter One

Willowkit jumped on top of the CherryClan warrior, growling. "Get off our land, you filthy animal!" she spat angrily. "Unless you want to pay gravely for the mistake you made of crossing the border..."

The CherryClan cat winced in fear, scrambling to her paws. "O-okay!! I'm going, going I say! You are too powerful, and too scary, I could never fight you ever!" she wailed in pain.

"Ooh, yes! Be scared, you creature of filth!" Willowkit cried after her.

"Uum... Willowkit, why are you screaming at that pinecone?"

Flowerkit was staring at Willowkit.

She was smiling.

"That is no pinecone! It is a CherryClan warrior, and I just saved everybody!" she squealed happily.

"I was just kidding, I understand," Flowerkit purred. "I just woke up from my nap, and I want to know if I could play with you?" she asked, stretching her legs.

"Ohh!! You do?" Willowkit said enthusiastically, jumping up and down in excitement.

"Sure do," said Flowerkit.

"Okay!" said Willowkit, "I want you to be the enemy warrior! Let me kill you, grawr!" squealed Willowkit excitedly, pouncing on her sister. "Die!"

Flowerkit showed little mercy as she threw her sister off of her and jumped on top of her.

For hours, the two kits pounced on each other and played their

little game. Their father, Emberwing, was out on a hunting patrol and wasn't due back home until around sunset, because the warriors had found a great place for hunting but it was pretty far away from the camp, and was even a little outside the border, but it wasn't in any other territory so they decided to check it out and see if they could do some good hunting to celebrate newleaf's early dawn.

Willowkit bounced away into the long blades of grass to hide from Flowerkit, but she tripped over something as she crawled through the small patch of longer grass.

A mouse! It's tiny, gray body was scurrying through the grass quickly.

Willowkit jumped on top of it at once. Why waste time stalking when you were fast and smart like her?

The mouse squealed in protest. "Gerroff--me--"

"Too bad!" Willowkit went to bite its neck, but then it turned around and stared at her with big, fretful eyes.

"Willowkit! Stop it, what're you--?"

Willowkit jumped off the mouse.

"Sorry, Ratkit! I thought you were a mouse."

"That doesn't make me feel very proud of my appearance, y'know," he snapped angrily. "Darn... don't do that again!"

"I said I'm sorry!" hissed Willowkit, and she turned and bounced away.

~

Emberwing had come back home, but his eyes looked sorrowful. So did their mother, Goldensky's.

Flowerkit was worried. "Why is everyone so sad?" she asked Willowkit.

"Dunno," Willowkit responded, "but it's so lame. Now nobody's playing with us, how lame!"

Flowerkit's eyes were filled with concern. "Well, something is definitely going on and I really want to know *what*, exactly..."

Goldensky nudged the kits back into the nursery. "Now, now... Flowerkit, Willowkit... my precious darlings, stay in the nursery with Dawnstep and your friends..."

"I want to know what's going on," said Flowerkit defiantly.

"Nothing, dears, now, it's getting late... I'll be with you soon, but you need to sleep. Okay? Now, hurry along."

But Emberwing had padded towards them. "We cannot hide this from them forever, Goldensky, my love," he said sweetly. "The kits need to know."

"They are too young! Stop, Emberwing, you'll scare them..."

Flowerkit tilted her head curiously. "Tell us, tell us!" she begged hopefully.

"Smokeberry was killed," he said softly. "We are mourning her now."

Goldensky gasped. "How could you-?! It's awful! Flowerkit, Willowkit, I'm so so so sorry--" Goldensky stuttered, wrapping her tail around her kits lovingly.

She tried to soothe them, but Willowkit was thunderstruck. *Dead*? No way... it couldn't be, no, it simply couldn't...

But out in the clearing lay Smokeberry's body; it wasn't just her leg that was limp now.

Yes, she was definitely...*dead*...

Chapter Two

Flowerkit had known what death was. It was what fresh kill was made from, and what the cats of StarClan had experienced. It was the fate that every living being would at some point had to face.

Despite all that, this felt completely new to Flowerkit. The corpse of a cat she knew, laying in front of her, felt much different from the fresh kill pile, though they were the same. Both were dead animals, so it made no sense to Flowerkit why this was so different.

It's because she was important to us. The thought appeared in Flowerkit's mind, and she grasped it. Yes, that was right, despite her injury, Smokeberry was important. While she was recovering from her run in with a wolf, she had entertained the kits and elders. Flowerkit remembered Smokeberry teaching her and Willowkit how to play mossball, and being watched by her to give her parents a break. Though there were days when Smokeberry couldn't manage to bring back any fresh kill, she had still contributed in any way she could.

Smokeberry was a good cat.

A new feeling was growing in the pit of Flowerkit's stomach. It was heavy, weighing her down, and painful, like claws ripping at her insides.

Is this what they call... grief?

Flowerkit couldn't rip her eyes away from Smokeberry's body. Her fur was ruffled, as if there had been a struggle, and there were many scratches throughout her body. She wanted to see closer- maybe, if she could get any hint to who did this, there would be a chance for justice. Justice that Smokeberry deserved.

Flowerkit took a step forward, to only be pulled back by her mother.

"You're staying right here, Flowerkit. It's bad enough that you have to see this..." Goldensky said, her voice cracking. Flowerkit knew that her mother had known Smokeberry well- everyone did, she had no enemies.

Flowerkit decided to listen to Goldensky. After all, if Smokeberry had any clues on her the warriors would do a better job at finding them anyways.

Looking over at Willowkit, Flowerkit realized that her sister was shaking, staring at Smokeberry with wide eyes.

"Come, let's all go inside now." Goldensky said to her kits as Littlespots- the medicine cat- began bringing the body to his den.

This time, Willowkit and Flowerkit followed their mother into the nursery willingly.

Inside, they were met with all the other kits. Ratkit, Lionkit, Mosskit, and Eaglekit. As Flowerkit entered somewhat calmly, and Willowkit padded in with a horrified look on her face, the others began bombarding them with questions.

"What's going on out there?" Asked Eaglekit.

"I-is it scary?" Mewed Mosskit, her light brown tail flicking.

"What happened? Is there blood? Can I touch it?" Lionkit asked eagerly.

"What's happening? Icesong says I'm too young to know, but I'm already two moons old!" Ratkit whined.

"If Icesong says you're too young, then you probably shouldn't know." Flowerkit concluded, ignoring the other kits' questions and instead climbing into the nest she shared with her mother and sister. She curled up into a furry ball of gold and orange, as it was what the feeling in her stomach compelled her to do.

"S-Smokeberry... why..." Willowkit said, stuttering and shaking, her blue eyes still wide in shock.

"I know sweetie, I know," Goldensky soothed, nuzzling Willowkit in an attempt to calm her down.

As Flowerkit lay in the nest of moss, thoughts were soaring through head, though one stood out the most.

Who would kill such a nice cat?

Chapter Three

Willowkit jumped away from Ratkit, hissing angrily. "You are so stupid! That kind of hurt, keep your claws sheathed!" she snapped angrily.

"I-I'm s-sorry!" whimpered Ratkit.
How forgetful Ratkit could be! He could've really hurt Willowkit!

Willowkit left Ratkit and scanned the camp for Flowerkit instead. The clearing was bright and sunny. The sunshine dappled one of the huge, pointy rocks on the edge of the clearing.

"Keep your tail still, Flowerkit!" said a voice.

Willowkit turned around to see Flowerkit in a crouch, accompanied by Amberpaw.

"Okay, okay, sorry!" said Flowerkit hastily, flattening out her golden tail.

"Whatcha doing?" said Willowkit, bouncing up towards them.

"Practicing the hunters crouch," said Amberpaw. "I learned it last moon, when I became an apprentice, but I've perfected it completely now; I mean, I did a while ago but I'm showing your sister now anyways, want me to show you too?" she asked excitedly, puffing out her chest proudly.

"Sure!" mewed Willowkit. "But I don't think I *need* to know... I'm so powerful and fast already that I don't think I need to know," she said proudly.

"Oh, yeah?" muttered Amberpaw. "Rabbits are fast, mice are too tiny, squirrels can climb..."

"No problem!" said Willowkit happily. "I'm too cool for lame old warrior moves anyway!"

"I'm glad I won't be your mentor, stubborn kit you are," Amberpaw meowed, rolling her eyes.

"Speaking of mentors, I wonder who ours will be?" Flowerkit mewed, straightening up.

"The Clan leader, perhaps?" Willowkit suggested energetically.

Amberpaw smiled. "Featherstar doesn't have time to waste trying to train a kit like *you*," she laughed. "But then, you're so stubborn... who does?"

"Hmph!" Willowkit looked away.

"Clan leaders don't necessarily mentor kits," Flowerkit pointed out. "It's more likely we will be assigned to a younger warrior, one who doesn't have much experience. It's not just training the apprentices, but it can teach the mentor a little something too, like how to mentor an apprentice and have some experience with younger cats, and perhaps also becoming a Clan deputy someday?"

"I lost you at 'experience'," said Willowkit, idly swatting a fly. "Your little speech got boring."

"You need to be more mature than this, Willowkit!" sighed Flowerkit. "Life isn't all fun and games, you know! Don't you want to be a good warrior someday?"

Willowkit shrugged. "I will either way, will I not? I already know I'm awesome, I don't need to be mature or smart like you are to be a good warrior," she mewed, attempting to pounce on a butterfly.

Well, why *couldn't* life just be fun, games, and catching butterflies?

"Well, I've got a patrol to take in a minute, with Runningleap, Daisypaw, Halfpath and Russetpelt," mewed Amberpaw. "See you." She hurriedly rushed to the camp entrance, where Halfpath and Russetpelt waited for her and the others.

"Should we follow them?" Willowkit excitedly asked.

"No!" cried Flowerkit. "You must be out of your mind, mad I say!

We need to do as we're told and stay in the camp, you know! Now, I'm getting kind of sleepy, so I'm going to take a nap and I'm sure mother will want you to sleep soon too," she yawned, heading off towards the nursery.

Willowkit stared towards the camp entrance. Daisypaw was there and Runningleap was rushing over.
Should I follow them? Probably not... oh, well, maybe next time. Now, where did that butterfly go off to?

Chapter Four

Flowerkit awoke to the feeling of something gently prodding at her side. She blinked open her heavy blue eyes and looked up, seeing Mosskit standing in front of her.

"S-sorry to wake you, Flowerkit, but all the other kits were ignoring me..." The young grey tortoiseshell glanced to the side. "You're the only one who pays attention to me, so I thought...."

"Sure, I'll play with you." Flowerkit replied without needing the question. This definitely wasn't the first time Mosskit had been left out. She was the runt of her litter, and so her brothers thought she was too weak to play with them.

The orange and golden she-kit stood up and stretched, not missing the excited look in Mosskit's eyes.

"Thanks Flowerkit, you're the best!" Mosskit exclaimed. "I don't know what I'll do once you become an apprentice."

"We'll still hang out!" Flowerkit promised, jumping out of her nest. "And I'll make sure Lionkit and Eaglekit are nicer to you. It's really unfair how they treat you."

"Really?" Mosskit asked with hopeful eyes.

"Of course!" Flowerkit responded with a swish of her orange-tipped tail. "Actually, I'll talk to them right now."

"Thanks Flowerkit!" Mosskit purred as the two she-kits exited the nursery together.

"Don't thank me yet." Flowerkit replied. She was keeping a calm composure, but in reality she was boiling with anger. Of course Willowkit was a pain, but the sisters could still play together without a problem. The thought of Mosskit's littermates purposely excluding her for her size alone was more than normal sibling

arguing.

Flowerkit lifted her tail to signal Mosskit to stay back before approaching Lionkit and Eaglekit. She stared at them until they stopped their game of mossball, and the two looked up at her.

"Hey Flowerkit, what's up?" Lionkit greeted, shaking out his golden fur.

"Lionkit, Eaglekit. Can I ask you two something?" Flowerkit started.

They both nodded. "Sure, what us it?" Eaglekit said.

Flowerkit paused for a second, her blue gaze burning into the toms. "Do you know what makes a great warrior?"

"Being the strongest, duh!" Lionkit replied proudly.

"Wrong!" Flowerkit hissed, quickly stepping forward to make the toms jump. "What makes a great warrior is a cat who despite their weaknesses, makes up for what they lack by outsmarting their opponents and surprising them, turning their weaknesses into an unexpected strength. A great warrior thinks of all possible outcomes and takes the best route. Any cat can be a great warrior." Flowerkit was quiet for a moment, hoping her message would sink in. "Now, Eaglekit and Lionkit, does bullying a cat just because they're smaller sound like something a great warrior would do? Because to me, that sounds like a coward. A coward that preys on those below them to cover up the fact that they're actually *weak*."

The two toms were speechless, looking at Flowerkit with shocked expressions. Flowerkit turned her back to them, heading back to her smaller friend. "So Mosskit, what did you wanna play?"

Mosskit ran up to Flowerkit and nuzzled her, purring. "You're awesome Flowerkit! That was awesome!"

"It's no problem, really." Flowerkit purred. "Anything for my friend."

Chapter Five

Everything was foggy and it was hard to see. Willowkit tried to focus on her surroundings, but all she could see was the swirling, endless mist. She was scared.

"Fl-Flowerkit...?" she mewed in a tiny voice. What was happening? This was bad, definitely. Willowkit was terrified; where were the others?

Suddenly, she heard cats muttering to one another, but their words were muffled. The only words Willowkit could catch were 'death', 'scared', and 'fight'.

"W-what's going on?" Willowkit cried. She frantically ran around the misted area, but no matter how far she ran there was nothing but mist, and the cat's voices grew neither faded nor grew any louder.

Willowkit jerked awake. *It was... all a dream?*

Willowkit yawned widely. What a strange dream.

"Hey, Flowerkit, wake up," Willowkit half mewed, half yawned.

"W-Willowkit..." yawned Flowerkit. "Is that you...? I'm tired..."

Willowkit shook her pelt. The only way she'd be allowed to go play outside would be if Flowerkit woke up, and so she had to wake her up straightaway!

"Get up, I want to go outside," Willowkit complained. "Hurry up!"

Flowerkit blinked open her eyes. When she yawned, she exposed her tiny, sharp teeth. "I don't want to wake yet..."

Willowkit sat down on her haunches. "Hurry up, you're wasting my time!"

It took a minute for Flowerkit to fully wake. "Oh, Willowkit, I can never sleep with you as my sister... I'm always woken up..."

"Great! Let's go!" squeaked Willowkit, turning and sprinting outside. Willowkit gazed up at the sky. It was still dawn, from the looks of things.

"It's so early," yawned Flowerkit.

"Who cares?" squealed Willowkit. "Nobody else is awake, so now we can play all morning by ourself in this camp!"

As she spoke, four cats spilled out from the camp entrance. Amongst them was Amberpaw, who looked quite energetic.

"Let's go again!" she suggested.

"Yeah, right," sighed a cat beside her. "I'm going to sleep right now! I'm tired as ever!"

Amberpaw glanced at Flowerkit and Willowkit. "Willowkit! Flowerkit! Want to play?" she asked them, bounding towards the nursery entrance where the kits stood.

"Do I!" mewed Willowkit, jumping up and down in excitement. "Come on, Flowerkit!"

"I'd rather just go to sleep..." Flowerkit mumbled.

Willowkit circled her sister. "I'll take that as a yes!" she mewed happily.

Flowerkit let out a heavy sigh before she reluctantly followed Amberpaw and Willowkit to play quietly in the empty clearing.

~

The kits had managed to play quietly enough till the other cats in the Clan had woken. Goldensky had been shrieking in the nursery because of the sudden disappearance of her kits, and was very angry because her kits had left the nursery without telling her or another cat.

"That's dangerous!" hissed Goldensky. "You could've been taken--a badger, a fox, or even an eagle... I was terrified!" she cried.

"I *wanted* to go back to the nursery, but Willowkit here convinced me to stay. I was too tired to argue, or even think straight for that matter," she added, yawning again like she had been all morning.

"Still! Never again! Do you hear me? How did you not wake up another warrior?"

"We played a game where you can't speak, of course!" Willowkit squeaked. "It was still fun!"

Goldensky was still furious. "It doesn't change the fact that you still left the nursery as early as you did! You could've--"

"Let all cats old enough to fetch their own prey, gather around the Fallenlog for a Clan meeting!" yowled Featherstar, interrupting Goldensky.
Willowkit suddenly realized what was probably going to happen, and she darted towards the Fallenlog immediately.

"Wait! Willowkit, come back!" Goldensky called, but Willowkit wasn't listening. She sat at the front of the crowd of cats.

"Willowkit, you've dirt right here..." Goldensky began licking Willowkit all over.

"Stop it! It's fine, mom, it's *fine*!"

Once all of the cats had gathered, Featherstar declared, "Flowerkit, Willowkit, please step forwards!"
Willowkit scrambled out of her mother's grasp and made to sit in front of the Fallenlog where Featherstar sat.
Goldensky and Emberwing were sitting at the front of the crowd, gazing at their kits with pride and love, their tails entwined.
Flowerkit, beside Willowkit, was glowing with pride. She was sitting still but Willowkit was shaking with excitement.

"Flowerkit, from this day forward, until you have earned your warrior name, you shall be known as Flowerpaw. Your mentor will be Snowfoot. Snowfoot, I expect you to pass down all the skills you

know to your new apprentice. "

Snowfoot's and Flowerpaw's eyes both shone with pride. Snowfoot padded up to Flowerkit. Smiling, she touched noses with her.

"Willowkit, from this day forward, until you have earned your warrior name, you shall be known as Willowpaw. Sunsong, I expect you to pass down all the skills you know to your new apprentice."

Willowpaw sat and impatiently waited for Sunsong to walk up to her, and the two of them touched noses.

Emberwing threw his head up and yowled, "Flowerpaw! Willowpaw!"
And the rest of the Clan joined in, and soon it felt like the whole world was cheering for Flowerpaw and Willowpaw.

"Flowerpaw! Willowpaw! Flowerpaw! Willowpaw!"

Chapter Six

The pride swelling in Flowerpaw's chest was like nothing she had ever felt before. Finally, she was an apprentice, and could have more freedom and room to improve herself. She could grow stronger and provide for her clan, all while training under a well respected warrior.

Willowpaw rushed over to her sister, a gleeful bounce in her step. "I can't believe it! Finally we get to leave camp and I can show off my awesome warrior skills for real!" She exclaimed, blue eyes sparkling with excitement.

Flowerpaw slowly shook her head. "All you have now are imaginary warrior skills, this is just giving you the opportunity to learn real skills and provide for MistClan. Isn't that amazing?"

"Yeah, yeah, whatever, I can already fight off any enemy! The Clans will all fear my name!" Willowpaw tried to look threatening, before Goldensky covered her in licks.

"I'm so proud of you! Both of you! I'm sure you'll be amazing warriors!" The golden queen raved as Willowpaw struggled to escape her.

Emberwing approached as well and touched his nose to Flowerpaw's cheek. "Of course they'll be amazing, they're related to me." He joked.

Flowerpaw saw her new mentor coming closer, and her excitement only grew. Snowfoot looked on with a soft expression, "I'll do my best to train your daughter well, Emberwing." He purred.

The ginger tom took a step back and nodded. "You'll do well, Snowfoot. You're already a great warrior, I'm glad you're training Flowerpaw." Emberwing paused for a moment. "Actually, I should let you get to that." He glanced over at his mate, "Goldensky, why don't we let these apprentices get out of our fur? I'm sure they're

eager."

Goldensky nodded in agreement. "Of course. Have fun, Willowpaw and Flowerpaw!" She said before walking off with Emberwing by her side.

Flowerpaw was left to meet the orange eyes of her mentor, contrasting against his pure white pelt. Snowfoot seemed like a friendly cat, and the apprentice found herself already liking him.

"Let's go out let's go out!" Willowpaw pestered Sunsong, making the golden tom appear already apprehensive. "C'mon, I've waited my whole life for this! Literally!"

"I think it'd be a good idea if we showed them the territory together." Snowfoot suggested to his fellow warrior.

"Yes, let's do that." Sunsong agreed. "It's very important for them to know-"

"C'mon Flowerpaw! Let's get out of here!" Willowpaw interrupted, running towards the camp entrance.

Flowerpaw let out a small sigh, pitying Sunsong for having to deal with her sister. The thought soon faded though as the two warriors started following Willowpaw out, and she quickly padded after them. She had patiently waited to leave the camp for six moons, and now she could.

Stepping out of the camp entrance for the first time, Flowerpaw immediately noticed the mist hovering over the forest floor. The MistClan camp was fairly clear, but she had known this unique fact about their territory. It was always covered in mist.

"Whoa..." Willowpaw gasped, eagerly looking around. "This is awesome! But I can't really see much."

"That's right, us MistClan cats don't rely on sight to get around." Sunsong explained proudly. "Our other senses are superior to those in other Clans, so we can move only using scent, sound, and feeling."

Flowerpaw listened with full attention and fascination. *We really are an amazing Clan.*

"So basically, we're all blind out here?" Willowpaw tilted her head. "That doesn't sound very fun."

"No Willowpaw, what it means is MistClan cats are the only ones who know how to move around here!" Flowerpaw responded, a little disappointed in her sister for thinking negatively of their territory. "Any other cat would get lost, which means we're more skilled and adapted."

"That's right, Flowerpaw." Snowfoot purred approvingly. "MistClan cats never get lost in the mist! Doesn't that make us the coolest?"

"Well, when you put it that way, we really are the coolest!" Willowpaw exclaimed, "I'm gonna sneak up on all our enemies and strike 'em down!"

"Yes, you'll learn how to do that too." Sunsong stated, "But for now, come. We'll show you the territory."

Sunsong and Snowfoot started walking forwards, Willowpaw bouncing behind. Flowerpaw decided to follow by scent instead of sight, as her mentor's white pelt was being lost in the mist. She made sure to stay close to her sister, because although the more childish she-cat would never admit it, Flowerpaw knew Willowpaw was the most likely one to get lost.

To her dismay, Flowerpaw found herself stumbling over tree roots and fallen branches more than she'd like to admit. Willowpaw may have been right about one thing; it did feel like she was blind.

Scents were fading in the damp atmosphere, and Flowerpaw feared she may have lost the group. Rushing forward, her head crashed into something soft.

Snowfoot let out a small laugh, turning to face his apprentice. "We're not doing battle training, Flowerpaw, there's no need to attack me." He said in a joking tone.

The gold and ginger apprentice felt her pelt growing hot in

embarrassment. "Sorry, Snowfoot..."

"This is the lake, Willowpaw and Flowerpaw." Sunsong spoke from a little farther ahead, and walking with Snowfoot, Flowerpaw and the white tom met with the others at the shore of the body of water.

Flowerpaw couldn't see very far ahead, but as long as her vision took her, there was water. Looking down at the dampened ground covered in sand, she noticed her paws were only a few steps from the water lapping at the earth.

"The entire lake is in our territory, which makes it much bigger than the other Clans." Sunsong explained with pride. "During your training, both of you will have to learn how to swim. We don't eat much fish, but it's always a good resource to have."

"No other Clan tries to take the lake since they're all scared of getting their paws wet... well, BrookClan cats fish, but they're too nice to steal our territory so they don't count." Snowfoot added, "We aren't scared of just a little water. It's usually safe."

"Usually?" Flowerpaw questioned, then started listing off possible ways it could be dangerous in her head.

"It's always safe if you know how to swim and don't do anything mouse-brained." Sunsong stated with a sigh. "Mostly, it's dangerous to kits, but they can't come out here anyways."

"Yeah, that's true. The lake's at the middle of our territory, so let's go..." Snowfoot paused for a moment before pointing left with his tail. "That way! There you'll see one of our borders."

Willowpaw was distracted splashing in the water, so Flowerpaw pawed at her shoulder as the warriors started walking. "C'mon Willowpaw, I'm not getting lost because of you." Flowerpaw meowed before following the others.

"I'm just having fun!" Willowpaw whined, before bounding after the leading cats.

Flowerpaw struggled to keep up, being so focused on keeping the scents of her Clanmates, while Willowpaw wasn't taking it very

seriously as usual, though still managing to keep close.

Soon enough, the cats slowed their pace, and Flowerpaw noticed the mist was thinning until it was almost completely gone. She could see clearly now, and with this newfound sight she saw a stretch of forest with towering trees. The cats came to a stop, and Sunsong spoke.

"You two should take a good smell of this place." He said, and Flowerpaw did as she was told. Breathing in through her nose, unfamiliar cat scents flooded in. It was strong, and wasn't like any cat of MistClan, more bitter and musky.

"Ew! It smells gross, what is that?!" Willowpaw demanded in disgust.

Snowfoot chuckled. "That's WolfClan. You're right, they are gross, but don't tell them that. Deatheye almost clawed my ears off once for that."

"There's a cat named Deatheye? What were they thinking?" Willowpaw laughed a bit.

"I know right? Falconstar really has a way with names." Snowfoot replied.

"Let's keep going." Sunsong turned and started walking along the border, and Flowerpaw followed more calmly now. She didn't have to worry about getting lost if she could see the others.

After not too long, a new scent drifted into Flowerpaw's nose. It was much sweeter than the bitter WolfClan scent, and had a calming effect to it.

"What Clan is that?" Flowerpaw asked, looking to her mentor.

"Good work Flowerpaw, you noticed we're at another border." Snowfoot meowed. "That's BrookClan. They rarely ever fight anyone really, they raise their kits to be rational and kind."

"That sounds so boring, who doesn't wanna fight?" Willowpaw exclaimed.

"I think it's a respectable way to live." Flowerpaw retorted. "Though fighting might be necessary sometimes."

"That's right Flowerpaw, battling can be fun but it's also dangerous. It's best to avoid it when we can." Snowfoot said, giving his apprentice a warm look which made Flowerpaw beam.

Flowerpaw moved her attention towards BrookClan's part of the forest. There was a small stream running along the border, curving back into the forest behind. The sweet smell made Flowerpaw want to walk closer, but she stay put, knowing that she couldn't trespass.

"Come, there's one more border to see." Sunsong said, and started walking once again. Again, the others followed him.

Instead of walking along the border this time, they plunged back into the mist, making Flowerpaw worried once again. *Why am I worried? I'm a MistClan cat, it's in my blood to be in the mist.*

Struggling once more, Flowerpaw managed to keep up until they walked out of the mist once again, approaching the last border.

"That must be CherryClan!" Willowpaw exclaimed, running right up to the border.

Flowerpaw followed her, though stayed a few steps behind. She took in the Clan's scent, wanting to memorize all of them. It was a little sour, mixed with the smell of fresh fruit. Looking out into CherryClan's territory, it was the most visually different. So many of the trees were covered in tiny pink flowers instead of leaves, giving off a bright and colourful look. Definitely very different from MistClan.

"CherryClan cats may look sweet, but they're no BrookClan." Sunsong stated as he stared out into the other territory. "Those warriors are fierce in battle."

"I wanna fight them! I'd rip them to shreds!" Willowpaw yowled, scaring a flock of birds out of a nearby tree.

Sunsong slowly shook his head, before turning around. "I think that's enough for today. Let's get back, you must be getting hungry."

"Yeah, I'm starving!" Snowfoot said, and began walking.

"I wasn't talking to you." Sunsong muttered, but followed anyways.

Flowerpaw was relieved to be heading back, though she was still full of excitement. *This is only the beginning.*

Chapter Seven

"Willowpaw... you were supposed to sneak up on Flowerpaw..." Sunsong sighed miserably.

Willowpaw straightened. "Yeah! I did that!" she insisted.

Sunsong rolled his eyes. "You thumped like a badger."

Willowpaw sighed. Sunsong was so lame. Why was she stuck with him? He wasn't any fun!

"Put your paws down slowly and quietly. Be patient. You only need to start running if the prey does," Sunsong meowed with a visual demonstration following his explanation.

Willowpaw padded a few paces back. Her sister was still facing the opposite direction but Willowpaw noticed her ear twitch impatiently. Willowpaw crouched down again, making sure her tail was still and slowly advanced forward, then jumped back up in frustration. "There's too much mist! I can't see!"

Sunsong took a deep breath. "Use your nose. You can smell Flowerpaw, can't you?"

Willowpaw lifted her nose into the air and sniffed. "One more try..." She moved back and slowly advanced on her sister once again.

Then Willowpaw leaped at her sister.

But Flowerpaw was quick to react. She leaped out of the way before Willowpaw could catch her.

"Mouse dung!" Willowpaw spat.

"You need to be faster than that!" Sunsong scolded.

Willowpaw flattened her ears. "I'll do it next time."

Sunsong glanced up at the sky and gave the air a quick sniff. "It's sunhigh... Willowpaw, you might be lucky to catch a lazy bird or something. Let's just go hunting; I don't want to return to camp empty handed. What do you say, Snowfoot?" Sunsong asked the snow-colored tom next to him.

"Sure thing," the other mentor agreed. "Where should we go?"

Sunsong tilted his head thoughtfully for a moment. "There's this place near Twintrees that we haven't tried for a little while now. We could show the apprentices Twintrees too while we're at it!"

"Twintrees!" Flowerpaw exclaimed, lighting up. "That's where the cats go to Gatherings to meet in peace every full moon."

"You're a smart young cat, aren't you, Flowerpaw?" Snowfoot purred.

Willowpaw stuck her nose up in the air. "I am too!" she insisted. "I knew that. Flowerpaw just said it before I had the chance."

Sunsong flicked his tail dismissively. "Let's just go. Come on. Time is precious."

Sunsong and Snowfoot turned around and padded side by side into the opposite direction, and they disappeared into the mist. Willowpaw bounded after them, struggling to at least notice Sunsong's yellow pelt in through the thick mist. It was thickest near the lake; it was impossible to see!

"Use your nose," Flowerpaw murmured to her sister as though she could read her thoughts. "Follow their scents."

Willowpaw obeyed her sister and sniffed at the misty air, following the trail Sunsong and Snowfoot had left behind, grunting as the damp sand touched her paws at every step. It was gross.

After a while of trying to keep up with the others relying solely on scent, Willowpaw was grateful as the mist gradually cleared away. Not too far in the distance she spotted two giant trees that stood close together, and they were much taller than any other tree that Willowpaw could see--or, for that matter, had ever seen.

Willowpaw immediately charged forward without thinking, excitement bubbling up inside her. She ignored Sunsong as he called for her to come back; it didn't matter! She wanted to go and see the Twintrees. What was wrong with that? She'd be fine - after all, she was an apprentice now.

Willowpaw skidded to a halt in front of the two trees. She heard Snowfoot, Sunsong and Flowerpaw's pawsteps behind her.

"Don't do that again, Willowpaw! It's dangerous!" Sunsong scolded.

Willowpaw ignored him; she was too busy gazing up in astonishment at the trees. "They're a lot bigger than I'd even imagined! They touch the clouds!" she squealed in excitement.

"Not quite," Snowfoot purred.

Willowpaw padded down the small slope and onto the giant roots where the two trees met and became like one. She turned to the others. "It's me, Willowstar, leader of MistClan! Let's begin the Gathering and do whatever we're supposed to do at Gatherings!" she announced.

Flowerpaw tilted her head. "I don't know if MistClan could use a childish leader like you," she teased.

"We came to hunt, not play games," Sunsong retorted impatiently.

Snowfoot nudged his friend playfully. "Come on, Sunsong. They're practically kits still; they're just having a bit of fun."

"Exactly! Snowfoot's right - well, not about the kit part. I'm not a kit anymore. But that shouldn't mean I can't have fun!" Willowpaw insisted.

Sunsong rolled his eyes. "Let's just go. Come on. There's prey to be caught and a Clan to feed."

Sunsong led them away from the Twintrees back to their own territory. Willowpaw was grateful there was little to no mist in this area. She could easily see if there was any prey now.

"Let me demonstrate," Sunsong offered quietly, raising his tail as a signal to halt. He turned and dropped into a crouch next to a large bush - Willowpaw craned her neck to try and see what he'd spotted, but couldn't see it. She watched instead as Sunsong slowly made his way forward - then he pounced.

There was a frantic cry of a mouse as it began to dart to safety, but Sunsong was quick. He caught it, then swiftly landed the killing bite. He'd killed it quickly and cleanly.

"That's amazing!" Flowerpaw murmured. She looked impressed. "You killed it so fast. It didn't even suffer."

Sunsong nodded. "Good job for noticing that. That's right - and now I thank StarClan for giving this prey life, so now it can feed the Clan."

Flowerpaw seemed to be drinking in every single word he was saying, but Willowpaw was growing impatient. "I wanna try," she begged.

Sunsong nodded. "But be quiet so you don't scare anything off."

Willowpaw nodded. She sniffed at the air and slowly moved around - she heard Snowfoot telling Flowerpaw the same thing Sunsong told her, and he was taking her a little farther for hunting.

Willowpaw was gradually losing her patience; she couldn't find anything. Then Sunsong tapped her shoulder with his tail and whispered, "There's a fat vole in that patch of ferns. See it? Smell it?"

Willowpaw turned around and looked where her mentor was pointing. She scanned the ferns, and frowned when she didn't notice it - she lifted her nose into the air and only smelled musky forest scents. Then she noticed the ferns twitch, and finally saw the fat vole scuffling around. Willowpaw dropped down into a hunters crouch and slowly advanced on the small creature.

A leaf crackled under Willowpaw's paws. Mouse dung!

The vole leaped in surprise and scurried away. Willowpaw tried to

chase after it, but she was too slow.

To her surprise, Sunsong leaped out of the bushes. She hadn't noticed he'd crouched there, as though expecting she'd fail and was lying in wait for when she did. He grabbed the vole and quickly killed it.

"Thank StarClan I did that," he muttered. He glanced over at Willowpaw. "Willowpaw, check your surroundings - if you'd have checked, you'd have known that leaf was there and you'd have been careful to avoid it."

"I tried my best!" Willowpaw whined.

Sunsong nodded. "I guess you did. Hopefully you're successful next time."

But she hadn't been. Willowpaw had found a pigeon after that, but again, stepped on a leaf. She'd grown impatient and pounced too early for the mouse she'd nearly had. But Sunsong had caught the mouse for her like he had the vole.

The two groups met up again. Flowerpaw carried a fat thrush, her eyes glowing with pride. Two mice were dangling by their tails in Snowfoot's jaws. Willowpaw carried the vole, and Sunsong, the mouse.

Flowerpaw dropped her thrush and tilted her head. "Did you catch those, Willowpaw? Great job!"

Willowpaw's heart sank and her tail drooped. "Sunsong caught them. I'm so terrible at hunting."

Flowerpaw sighed. "I'm sure you'll get the hang of it eventually," she meowed, although it sounded forced to Willowpaw.

"Hopefully." Willowpaw and Flowerpaw picked their prey back up and the four of them returned to camp.

"My daughters! Those are my daughters!" it was Emberwing. His eyes glowed happily and he bounded over to them as they dropped their prey on the pile.

"Flowerpaw caught some, but Willowpaw didn't catch anything," Sunsong reported, sounding disappointed.

Emberwing flicked his tail. "She'll get it eventually," he mewed. But to Willowpaw, he sure didn't sound very sure...

Willowpaw nodded. "I'll try my best!" she promised.

Sunsong ignored her. "You can both have something to eat now," he told Flowerpaw and Willowpaw.

Flowerpaw took one of the mice she'd caught, and Willowpaw decided to take the fat vole she'd nearly caught at the start of the patrol. She and Flowerpaw padded towards one corner of the camp, and they sat down next to each other, so close their pelts brushed.

"Today was fun," Willowpaw meowed. "I didn't do that great, but I just didn't have a great sleep because I was nervous! Tomorrow I'll do better."

Flowerpaw nodded. "Hopefully. Personally, I'm really excited to go to the Moonshine," she told her sister. "Every apprentice has to go before they become warriors. Going to such a sacred place to speak with StarClan will be so cool! Don't you think?" Her eyes glowed with excitement. "I hope we can go soon."

"Yeah! And I heard it's super pretty!" Willowpaw added. She'd only heard of the place from stories that the warriors and elders told, but apparently it was this really beautiful place - a hollow full of stones, and the sky was sparkling and had beautiful lights. That was where StarClan would be waiting, and once asleep, Willowpaw would be able to visit them. The dead cats! Her warrior ancestors! Maybe her mother's mother! Maybe her father's mother's father!

Maybe Smokeberry.

The thought struck Willowpaw suddenly and she sighed. The poor cat. She'd been defenseless. And then killed. No cat even found out who killed her; all they knew was that a cat had killed her judging from the scratch marks. But they couldn't find out who.

Willowpaw shook her head. No point worrying about it anymore.

No other cats have died since then, so maybe she was just unlucky. She tried to convince herself that would never happen again, but her stomach almost felt sick with uneasiness.

Once Willowpaw had finished her mouse, she sat up and stretched. Another one of the apprentices, Amberpaw, padded up to her.

"Hi, Willowpaw!" she meowed in greeting. "Halfpath and I were going to go battle training tomorrow and he told me to invite you and Flowerpaw and your mentors! What do you say?"

Willowpaw nodded. That should take my mind off of Smokeberry. "Sure thing! Can you show me some right now so I'm ready for tomorrow? And I'm bored and just want something to do now."

Amberpaw nodded. "Yeah, I'll show you. Come over here!"

Battle training should take my mind off of useless things! "Come on, Flowerpaw! Join us!" Willowpaw bounded off towards Amberpaw.

Chapter Eight

Flowerpaw blinked open her blue eyes, heavy with sleep, to see dawn's gentle sunlight filtering through the weaved together branches and ferns of the apprentice den. With a yawn, the young mostly golden she-cat stretched out her forepaws and arched her back, before stepping out of her comfortable mossy nest.

Padding out of the den to join the waking Clan, the first thing Flowerpaw saw was Willowpaw wrestling with Amberpaw near the fresh-kill pile. The red-brown pelted apprentice pinned Willowpaw to the ground, only for the younger cat to kick her off and pounce again. Flowerpaw let out a small purr of amusement. *Willowpaw might not be great at hunting, but looks like she might be a natural fighter.*

"Quietflower!" Hazelpaw exclaimed while running past, the ginger apprentice rushing to her light grey mentor. "C'mon, eat something! You're looking thin, you can't keep letting yourself get weak like this!"

"I'm sorry, Hazelpaw..." Quietflower sighed softly. "I know, I need to focus on finishing your training, but my sister..."

"Smokeberry would want you to be healthy." Hazelpaw blinked sympathetically. "I'll get you something to eat."

A slight pain jabbed at Flowerpaw's chest. It felt like every day she was reminded of the sweet cat's death, and how much it was effecting the Clan. Before she could think too much about it, a familiar meow entered her ears.

"Hey, Flowerpaw!" The gold and ginger cat turned to see Mosskit happily skipping towards her, tail high in greeting. "Wanna share some prey? I know Emberwing just brought back a huge vole!"

Emberwing was already out hunting? But it's only dawn! Flowerpaw pushed aside the confusion of her father's actions to meet her friend

with a welcoming purr. "Of course! A vole sounds nice, I'm starving."

Mosskit let out squeak of delight, running over to the fresh-kill pile, narrowly avoiding the playing apprentices. *She sure seems happier than usual.* Flowerpaw thought to herself, following the kit.

Picking up a rather plump vole from the pile, the young tortoiseshell turned to her friend once more and the two found a place to sit. They settled down with the prey and began eating their shares, like the friends had done many times before.

"What's up with you Mosskit? You seem a lot happier than usual this morning." Flowerpaw asked in curiosity after finishing her half of the meal.

Mosskit licked her lips before talking, green eyes sparkling. "Eaglekit got in trouble last night! And Littlespots praised me!" She exclaimed. "Eaglekit had to go to him because his belly hurt, but he ran in and messed up herb piles Littlespots was sorting! I helped him sort them again after, and he told me I was a really kind, dependable cat for cleaning up when it wasn't my mistake."

"That's awesome, Mosskit!" Flowerpaw purred. "I'm sure Littlespots really appreciated the help, he's always so busy!"

"I'm gonna see if I can help him today too, then everyone will know I'm just as important as Eaglekit and Lionkit!" Mosskit stated proudly.

"You're no less than them Mosskit, I'd say you're even better." Flowerpaw replied.

"Flowerpaw, c'mon, we're going! You're as slow as a snail!" Willowpaw exclaimed from across the camp, standing with Amberpaw, Snowfoot, Sunsong, and Halfpath.

"Looks like I gotta go." Flowerpaw meowed, standing up. "I'll see you later, Mosskit."

"Okay, bye Flowerpaw!" Mosskit mewed, as Flowerpaw rushed off to join the other cats.

Halfpath was an undeniably strong cat, being a muscular tom with brown fur, his black tail and white ears making his appearance unique. Amberpaw stood tall as she could beside him, seeming to want to be more mature as the eldest apprentice among the three. Flowerpaw thought she was lucky to have such an experienced mentor, but she was also glad to have Snowfoot. His laid back attitude made learning less stressful and more fun.

"Let's get going." Sunsong said, leading the way out the camp entrance. The group followed him, and plunged into the now familiar mist. It was difficult being partially blind in the MistClan forest, but Flowerpaw reassured herself that she would learn to move easily on her land.

The cats soon reached a small clearing, and feeling the ground, Flowerpaw realized there must not be many trees in this area, as there weren't any roots to trip over. Willowpaw was bouncing with anticipation, as Flowerpaw waited patiently for instructions.

"Today we will be practicing some basic battle moves." Halfpath explained. "Amberpaw is more experienced, so she will help you two practice, Flowerpaw and Willowpaw. It will help her refine her skills as well."

"Over here Flowerpaw." Snowfoot called, padding a bit away from the group. "I'll give you some tips before we get started."

Flowerpaw followed his faint white outline, and he became clearer as she drew closer. The apprentice sat at full attention.

"Firstly, so you know what weak spots you should aim for in a fight?" Snowfoot asked.

Flowerpaw thought for a moment. Never having fought before, she wasn't sure what to say. "Um... eyes are weak?"

Snowfoot chuckled. "True, but you shouldn't go blinding every cat you fight, that isn't very nice." He purred in amusement. "Clawing at ears can disorient an enemy, and it's really painful, trust me. Kicking at the stomach can knock the wind out of a cat, and if your enemy is bigger than you, jumping on their back and clawing

everywhere is a good strategy."

"Okay... ears, stomach, jumping on backs..." Flowerpaw repeated to herself.

"Don't worry about memorizing all that, by actually practicing you'll naturally remember." Snowfoot responded, "You can't really stop to think in a fight, so training is to make your instincts strategic."

Flowerpaw nodded. "Alright, I'll try my best!"

"Flowerpaw, would you like to try first?" Halfpath called, and Flowerpaw bounded over to him and his apprentice.

"Okay!" She tried to sound confident, though she really wasn't. *It's only practice, it's okay if I mess up!* She told herself. *Even if it's embarrassing...*

"Attack Amberpaw whenever you're ready." Halfpath meowed, "But remember, during training, keep your claws sheathed."

Flowerpaw nodded, then met Amberpaw's yellow eyes. *Maybe if I go for her legs, I can disorient her.* The young she-cat aimed before rushing at the other apprentice, who easily stepped out of the way.

"C'mon Flowerpaw, don't be so obvious!" Amberpaw exclaimed.

Flowerpaw ran at her again, a little frustrated, and attempted to jump on her back. Amberpaw ducked under, leaving Flowerpaw to fall hard on the ground.

Flowerpaw attempted a few more times, each one more of a failure than the last, before Snowfoot called her back. "Alright, that's enough for now, Flowerpaw."

Flowerpaw's pelt was hot with embarrassment, especially at the fact that Willowpaw almost seemed happy about her failures. She padded back over to her mentor and sat beside him, head down.

"It was only your first try, it's normal to not get it right away." Snowfoot said sympathetically, "We can work on your skills, you can't be a natural at everything."

"I guess..." Flowerpaw muttered, as Willowpaw got ready for her turn.

Willowpaw stared right at Amberpaw's face, and ran towards her, yowling a battle cry. She leapt, and Amberpaw ducked, only for Willowpaw to hit her true mark; Amberpaw's back. The red-brown apprentice rolled over, making Willowpaw have to jump off. However, she was quick enough to be able to pin Amberpaw down. Amberpaw kicked at her stomach and threw her off, straightening up.

"Great job Willowpaw!" Sunsong exclaimed, proud of his apprentice for the first time. "With a bit of work, you'll make a fierce fighter."

"I'm already the best!" Willowpaw purred, obviously enjoying the praise.

Flowerpaw's head dipped even lower, as she let out a long sigh. Willowpaw was almost an even match for the much more experienced apprentice. She had always thought that logical thinking and analysis would get her where she needed to be, but was Willowpaw right this time in using brute force?

"Flowerpaw, it's your turn again." Snowfoot nudged her, and Flowerpaw obediently stood. "Right..." *I guess I'll just have to work harder for this.*